

Shotokan's 26 Katas: Names and Overview

Shotokan Karate features 26 core katas, each with its own sequence and focus. Here is the complete list of the 26 Shotokan katas, along with their meanings^[1] ^[2] ^[3] ^[4]:

Kata Name	Meaning
Heian Shodan	Peaceful Mind One
Heian Nidan	Peaceful Mind Two
Heian Sandan	Peaceful Mind Three
Heian Yondan	Peaceful Mind Four
Heian Godan	Peaceful Mind Five
Tekki Shodan	Iron Horse One
Tekki Nidan	Iron Horse Two
Tekki Sandan	Iron Horse Three
Bassai Dai	Penetrating the Fortress (Big)
Bassai Sho	Penetrating the Fortress (Small)
Kanku Dai	To Look at the Sky (Big)
Kanku Sho	To Look at the Sky (Small)
Enpi (Empi)	Flying Swallow
Jion	Love (and) Goodness
Jitte	Ten Hands
Gankaku	Crane on the Rock
Hangetsu	Half Moon
Chinte	Incredible Hands
Sochin	Preserve Peace
Meikyo	Mirror of the Soul
Jiin	Named after the Saint
Gojushiho Dai	54 Steps (Big)
Gojushiho Sho	54 Steps (Small)
Nijushiho	24 Steps
Wankan	Crown of a King

Kata Name	Meaning
Unsu	Cloud Hands

Step-by-Step Instructions for Each Kata

General Approach

Each kata consists of a sequence of blocks, strikes, kicks, and stances, practiced in a set order. While a full, detailed step-by-step for all 26 katas is too extensive for a single answer, here's how you can approach learning them:

- **Start with the Heian series:** These are foundational and progressively introduce basic techniques and combinations.
- **Move to Tekki and advanced katas:** These introduce more complex stances, movements, and applications.

Example: Taikyoku Shodan (Introductory Kata)

Taikyoku Shodan is often taught as a pre-Heian kata. Here's a step-by-step summary^[5]:

1. **Yoi (Ready Position):** Stand in musubi-dachi (heels together, toes out), hands at sides.
2. **Step 1:** Turn left, step into left zenkutsu dachi (front stance), execute left gedan barai (downward block).
3. **Step 2:** Step forward with right foot, right oi tsuki (stepping punch).
4. **Step 3:** Step forward with left foot, left oi tsuki.
5. **Step 4:** Turn 180° to the right, right gedan barai.
6. **Step 5:** Step forward with left foot, left oi tsuki.
7. **Step 6:** Step forward with right foot, right oi tsuki.
8. **Step 7:** Turn left (90°), left gedan barai.
9. **Step 8:** Step forward with right foot, right oi tsuki.
10. **Step 9:** Turn right (90°), right gedan barai.
11. **Step 10:** Step forward with left foot, left oi tsuki.
12. **Step 11:** Step forward with right foot, right oi tsuki.
13. **Step 12:** Turn left (90°), left gedan barai.
14. **Step 13:** Step forward with right foot, right oi tsuki.
15. **Step 14:** Step forward with left foot, left oi tsuki.
16. **Step 15:** Turn right (90°), right gedan barai.
17. **Step 16:** Step forward with left foot, left oi tsuki.
18. **Step 17:** Step forward with right foot, right oi tsuki.
19. **Step 18:** Turn left (90°), left gedan barai.

20. **Step 19:** Step forward with right foot, right oi tsuki.

21. **Step 20:** Step forward with left foot, left oi tsuki.

22. **Step 21:** Yame (finish), return to ready position.

Key Points:

- Only two techniques: Gedan barai (downward block) and Oi tsuki (stepping punch), all in zenkutsu dachi (front stance).
- Focus on proper stances, hip rotation, and sharp kime (focus) at the end of each technique^[5].

Finding Step-by-Step Instructions for All 26 Katas

- **Written and Video Guides:** Many Shotokan resources provide detailed written and video instructions for each kata^[2] ^[6] ^[7]. For each kata, you can find step-by-step breakdowns by searching for the kata name followed by “step by step” or “tutorial.”
- **Progression:** After mastering Taikyoku and the Heian katas, proceed to Tekki, Bassai, Kanku, and the advanced forms, each introducing new techniques and combinations^[4].

Sample: Heian Shodan (First Heian Kata)

1. **Yoi:** Ready stance.
2. **Step 1:** Turn left, left down block.
3. **Step 2:** Step forward, right lunge punch.
4. **Step 3:** Turn right, right down block.
5. **Step 4:** Step forward, left lunge punch.
6. **Continue pattern:** The kata follows an “I” shaped embusen (pattern), alternating blocks and punches, with specific turns and kiai (spirit shout) at designated points.

For each subsequent kata, the complexity increases, adding new stances, blocks, strikes, and turns.

Where to Learn Each Kata Step-by-Step

- **Online Videos:** YouTube has comprehensive playlists where instructors demonstrate each kata step-by-step^[6] ^[7].
- **Instructional Websites:** Sites like Black Belt Wiki and Shotokan Karate Online provide written instructions and video links for each kata^[2] ^[5].
- **Dojo Instruction:** The best way to learn kata is under the guidance of a qualified instructor to ensure correct form and application.

Summary

- Shotokan Karate features 26 core katas, each with a unique sequence and focus^{[1] [2] [3] [4]}.
- Step-by-step instructions for each kata are available through dedicated websites and video tutorials^{[2] [6] [5] [7]}.
- Start with the Heian series and progress through the list, mastering each before moving on to the next.
- For in-depth breakdowns, refer to the resources mentioned or consult your instructor for personalized guidance.

*
**

1. <https://www.shotokankaratecalgary.com/kata.php>
2. <https://blackbeltwiki.com/shotokan-karate-katas>
3. <https://karatecoaching.com/26-shotokan-kata-overview-page/>
4. <https://shotokankaraterebel.com/the-26-essential-shotokan-karate-katas/>
5. <https://www.shotokankarateonline.com/3rd-kyu-brown-belt/taikyoku-shodan-kata-step-by-step/>
6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_BosNk7PSos
7. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7E6AE4B1911CF3C0>